

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO CNO
CINCUSNAVEUR

S E C R E T STATE 200200

EXDIS MILITARY HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING REPEAT CAIRO 13913 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO
ALEXANDRIA AUG 22.
QUOTE S E C R E T CAIRO 13913

EXDIS

DEPT PASS CNO, CINCUSNAVEUR AND SECDEF FOR INFO

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, MILI, EG, US
SUBJ: POSSIBLE US NAVY USE OF ALEXANDRIA SHIPYARD

REF 76 CAIRO 13814,

SUMMARY: IN CONTEXT GENERAL DISCUSSION OF ALEXANDRIA SHIP-
YARD, I PROBED INFORMALLY SADAT'S CURRENT THINKING RE POSSIBLE
USE BY US NAVY OF SHIPYARD REPAIR FACILITIES. NOTED SHIP-
YARD SUPERINTENDENT HAD TWO YEARS AGO INVITED US NAVY MAKE
USE OF IT, BUT WE HAD QUESTIONED WHETHER INVITATION HAD
HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL CLEARANCE AND CONCLUDED IT DID NOT.

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WE WERE AWARE GOE SENSITIVITIES AFTER OUSTER OF SOVIETS FROM
ALEXANDRIA NAVAL FACILIITIES AND DID NOT WISH EMBARRASS GOE
BY FORMALLY PURSUING MATTER. SUBJECT HAD AGAIN ARISES TEN
MONTHS AGO, AT WHICH TIME BOTH FAHMY AND GAMASY INDICATED
SHIPYARD SUPERINTENDENT'S INVITATION HAD NO POLITICAL CLEARANCE
AND VOICED RESERVATIONS ABOUT IDEA. I UNDERSTOOD US NAVY
REMAINS INTERESTED IN POSSIBLE USE OF SHIPYARD REPAIR FAC-

ILITIES, BUT WE WOULD CLEARLY WISH TO DEFER TO PRESIDENT'S WISHES. SADAT AGREED SUCH USE WAS NOT POLITICALLY FEASIBLE EARLIER, BUT SAID SITUATION HAS CHANGED AND HE WOULD BE HAPPY HAVE US NAVY USE ALEXANDRIA SHIPYARD FOR VESSEL REPAIRS. HE AGREED THAT PROCEDURE ENVISAGED EARLIER CALLING FOR VISIT BY US NAVY SURVEY TEAM TO SHIPYARD WAS BEST WAY PROCEED. I ASKED THAT HE ADVISE GAMASY AND FAHMY OF HIS VIEWS. IF US NAVY STILL INTERESTED, RECOMMEND I BE INSTRUCTED FORMALLY TO DISCUSS AT APPROPRIATELY HIGH LEVEL SCOPE AND TIMEFRAME FOR PROPOSED SURVEY TEAM. DETAILS COULD THEREAFTER BE WORKED OUT BY CONGEN ALEXANDRIA AND ALUSNA DIRECTLY WITH SHIPYARD SUPERINTENDENT. END SUMMARY

1. AS REPORTED BY SEPTTEL, DURING MY MEETING WITH SADAT AND VP MUBARAK IN ALEXANDRIA, AUG 20, THE PRESIDENT MENTIONED HIS INTENTION OF GETTING RID OF THE REMAINING SOVIET TECHNICAL ADVISERS AT THE ALEXANDRIA SHPYARD AND TRYING TO REPLACE THEM WITH EITHER JAPANESE OR ITALIANS. THE SHIPYARD, HE ASSERTED, NO LONGER NEEDS SOVIET ADVISERS. THE PRESIDENT SPOKE OF HIS PROPOSED ACTION IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS CURRENT CONTRETEMPS WITH THE SOVIETS INVOLVING A STOPPAGE OF EGYPTIAN LONG-STAPLE COTTON EXPORTS TO THE SOVIET UNION BECAUSE OF HIS DISPLEASURE THAT CZECH TANKS ALLEGEDLY ALREADY PAID FOR IN HARD CURRENCY HAVE BEEN HELD UP DUE TO SOVIET PRESSURE ON CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

2. INASMUCH AS THE PRESIDENT WAS DISCUSSING THE ALEXANDRIA
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SHIPYARD, THIS SEEMED AN APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY TO PROBE HIS CURRENT THINKING RE POSSIBLE US NAVY USE OF THE SHIPYARD. I NOTED THAT ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO, WE HAD RECEIVED A LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE SHIPYARD INVITING US NAVAL VESSELS TO USE THE YARD. SINCE WE HAD NO INDICATION AT THE TIME THAT THIS LETTER HAD HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL APPROVAL, AND WERE AWARE OF GOE POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES IN THE WAKE OF THE PRESIDENT'S TERMINATION OF SOVIET NAVAL FACILITIES IN ALEXANDRIA, WE HAD NOT WISHED TO EMBARRASS GOE BY FORMALLY PURSUING SUBJECT. SOME TEN MONTHS AGO, HOWEVER, SUBJECT HAD AROSE AGAIN. AS A RESULT, I HAD DISCUSSED THE SHIPYARD SUPERINTENDENT'S LETTER WITH FAHMY AND ASKED WHETHER THE INVITATION HAD POLITICAL APPROVAL. FAHMY, AFTER CHECKING WITH GAMASY, HAD DISCLAIMED ANY KNOWLEDGE AND HAD SUGGESTED THE TIME WAS NOT RIGHT FOR SUCH A REQUEST. WISHING TO RESPECT GOE VIEWS ON THIS MATTER, WE HAD THEREFORE DROPPED THE MATTER. I HAD NEVER HERETOFORE DISCUSSED IT WITH THE PRESIDENT, BUT I WANTED HIM TO KNOW THAT IF HE AT ANY TIME CONSIDERED IT POLITICALLY FEASIBLE TO PERMIT US NAVY VESSELS TO USE ALEXANDRIA SHIPYARD, I THOUGHT US NAVY MIGHT STILL BE INTERESTED. HOWEVER, I WAS RAISING MATTER WITH HIM QUITE INFORMALLY AND, AS IN THE PAST, WE WOULD WANT TO BE GUIDED

BY HIS WISHES.

3. SADAT AGREED THAT, IF SENT TWO YEARS AGO, THE LETTER PROBABLY HAD NO SENIOR LEVEL POLITICAL APPROVAL. HE ALSO RECALLED THAT FAHMY HAD MENTIONED THE MATTER TO HIM SOMETIME AGO AND THAT HE HAD APPROVED FAHMY'S ANSWER BECAUSE OF PREVAILING POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES. BUT, HE OPINED, SITUATION IS DIFFERENT NOW. AFTER SOME FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH MUBARAK, SADAT AID HE WOULD HE HAPPY HAVE US NAVY USE ALEXANDRIA SHIPYARD REPAIR FACILITIES. MUBARAK ECHOED THIS VIEW.

4. SAID I WOULD REPORT HIS COMMENTS TO WASHINGTON, I RECALLED THAT EARLIER THOUGHT HAD BEEN TO SEND US NAVAL SURVEY MISSION TO LOOK AT ALEXANDRIA SHIPYARD IN ORDER TO ASCERTAIN
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EXTENT TO WHICH US NAVY MIGHT BE ABLE TO USE IT. I IMAGINED US NAVY WOULD STILL LIKE TO FOLLOW SUCH PROCEDURE. WAS THIS AGREEABLE TO HIM? WHEN HE AFFIRED THAT IT WAS, I SUGGESTED THAT HE ALSO LET GAMASY AND FAHMY KNOW HIS VIEWS.

5. I MENTIONED ABOVE CONVERSATION TO FAHMY AUG 21. SINCE FAHMY BELIEVES THE PRESIDENT IS MAKING A MISTAKE IN PRESSING THE CURRENT CONTROVERSY WITH THE SOVIETS, HE WAS NOT OVERLY ENTHUSIASTIC, BUT ACCEPTED SADAT'S POSITION. HE THOUGHT GAMASY WOULD HAVE SOME DOUBTS, BUT WOULD DEFER TO THE PRESIDENT'S WISHES.

6. IF US NAVY REMAINS INTERESTED IN POSSIBLE USE OF ALEXANDRIA SHIPYARD, AND STILL THINKS BEST WAS TO PROCEED IS TO SEND SURVEY TEAM, NEXT STEP WOULD SEEM TO BE TO INSTRUCT ME WORK OUT WITH GOE SCOPE OF SUCH SURVEY AND MUTUALLY AGREEABLE TIME FRAME. INITIALLY APPROACH SHOULD AGAIN BE TO SADAT AND/OR MUBARAK, PROBABLY THE LATTER. THIS COULD BE FOLLOWED BY AN APPROACH BY ME TO GEN GAMASY AND FAHMY AND THEREAFTER BY ALUSNA TO EGYPTIAN CNO ADMIRAL REFAAT. CONGEN ALEXANDRIA AND ALUSNA COULD THEN WORK OUT ADVANCE ARRANGEMENTS WITH SHIPYARD SUPERINTENDENT, ONCE LATTER HAS BEEN ADEQUATELY INSTRUCTED BY HIS SUPERIORS.

EILTS

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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